

## 7<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum Assessment

*(based on surveys of youth participants conducted at the end of the Forum)*

### I. THE CONTEXT OF THE ASSESSMENT (base assumptions, criteria, constraints)?

The assessment of the UNESCO Youth Forum **cannot be done in a vacuum but needs to** consider some basic elements and assumptions. In conducting the assessment:

- UNESCO has **identified specific criteria to assess the success of the Youth Forum**. These are based on the specific objectives that UNESCO had set for the 7<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum, building on lessons learnt and on the feedback from youth participants of previous UNESCO Youth Fora, including the 2009 UNESCO Youth Forum.
- UNESCO has considered the very **specific nature** of the Youth Forum and the fact that it is a structured experience within the context of the General Conference. As such, there is always a risk of a potential mismatch with the expectations of the youth delegates. It is important to note, however, that UNESCO reorganized the format of the 7<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum in an effort to provide multiple experiences which were positively perceived by the youth delegates, such as the capacity-building sessions and the youth Expo, as well as the many informal events and café discussions.
- It is also important to consider the limited starting budget, which caused the Secretariat to be involved in a continuous fund-raising and partnership building effort until only a month before the Youth Forum. This effort caused **delays** in confirming and developing some parts of the programme and in preparatory work, which were pending availability of resources. However, it is important to note that the Secretariat managed to mobilize a record of US\$250,000 for the UNESCO Youth Forum, both through extra-budgetary and in-kind contributions. It is equally important to note that, **within only a month, UNESCO and Grupo ABC were able to design, develop and produce an entirely new branding identity for the Youth Forum, including a Public Service Announcement, posters, visuals etc.**

### II. KEY RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT MADE BY YOUTH

UNESCO surveyed all youth delegates and observers and requested assessment reports from the youth facilitators, youth bloggers, young volunteers and members of the youth team that organized the Youth Forum (young staff, consultants, interns). The **key findings of the assessment are presented in this document.**

- Out of the 211 youth delegates surveyed, **207 youth delegates provided an assessment, and only 4 did not provide any feedback.** 63% of them had previous experience in International/Regional Youth Meetings and 36% did not.
- The **specific criteria** – both quantitative and qualitative – **on which the 7<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum is assessed are:**
  - The overall appreciation of the Youth Forum by the youth delegates

- On average the delegates gave a **score of 7/10 to their overall experience of the Forum**. Of the 207 youth delegates, 37% found the Youth Forum excellent, 52% satisfactory and 12% not satisfactory.
  - **86% of the delegates** thought that **the Forum helped them to identify concrete follow-up actions**.
  - Many delegates were **pleased with the respect for gender parity** during the Forum.
- Increasing attendance rates and ensuring gender parity (with specific focus on LDCs)
- **In comparison with the 2009 Youth Forum, the number of countries attending increased by 53%** (from 83 MS to 127 MS) as did **the number of delegates which rose by 65%** (from 128 delegates to 211 delegates). The participation of 211 youth delegates exceeded the initially set benchmark of 135 youth delegates.
  - The participation of young women and of young men reached the same percentage as in 2009: **54% of the youth delegates were young women and 46% young men**.
  - The **age criterion (18 to 24 years old) was respected by 78.67%**, while at the previous Youth Forum it was at 76%.
  - **A record 58% of the LDCs** participated in the Forum (28 among 48). The initial benchmark of 17% in SISTER was largely surpassed, as well as the 16% of LDC participation attained in the 2009 Youth Forum.
- The diversity of the backgrounds of the participants

Alongside the youth delegates, the UNESCO Youth Forum succeeded in bringing together:

- Representatives from youth and civil society organizations, and international and regional organizations active on youth
  - Youth activists and entrepreneurs; youth with disabilities; indigenous youth; youth from favelas and former gang members; youth bloggers.
- The quality of the Forum's speakers and the participation of an equal number of young and adult speakers
- The overall **quality of the speakers** was a standard comment in the assessment sheets. The youth delegates stressed that UNESCO *made a **great choice of speakers with different backgrounds who were very inspiring and allowed the sessions to have real content***.
  - On the **number of speakers, all plenary sessions** combined (with the exception of the final plenary on the adoption of the report) featured **15 youth speakers and 14 adult speakers**. While there was an effort to maintain such balance in the parallel sessions organized by the different Sectors, **this was indeed not the case in all parallel sessions**.
- The quality of the Forum's components
- **86% of delegates found the capacity-building sessions very useful**. The Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Workshop, organized by Forest Whitaker, got the majority of positive votes among all capacity-building workshops. Delegates were less satisfied with the workshop on "Reaching international organizations via social media". It is important to note that **it is the first time that the Youth Forum hosted capacity-building sessions for youth delegates, as this was not the case in the past;**

- On the **plenary sessions, the session on the adoption of the Forum’s Final Report**, which was extended by 4 additional hours to allow the youth delegates to debate and adopt their final recommendations, **got a majority score of “excellent” from the youth delegates**. Youth delegates were less satisfied with the plenary session on the follow-up to the 6<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum, even though they have all noted it as “satisfactory”.
  - Concerning the **Parallel Sessions**, it was the session on “Culture of Peace, conflict resolution and violence prevention” that got a majority of “excellent” ratings. The Forum also hosted a specific session on African youth which was universally appreciated by the youth delegates. Delegates were less satisfied with the session “Towards green societies: engaging youth to create local solutions for a sustainable future” workshop.
- The extent to which youth participants got engaged, with lengthy and vigorous debates

While appreciating the quality of content and speakers, **70% of the delegates considered there was a lack of time and space to debate and affirmed that they didn’t have the chance to speak until the third day. 60% of the delegates recommended that the 2013 Youth Forum should last more days with more time for debates and less speeches.**

- The extent to which youth delegates were able to network and exchange with youth development actors and partners: **60% of the delegates considered that networking was the most interesting part of the Forum.**
- The extent to which youth delegates participated in preparatory consultations and exchanges and accessed information on the Youth Forum:
  - **63% of delegates participated actively in the online discussions organized prior to the Forum while 37% did not participate at all, mainly due to late nominations.** Among those involved, the majority saw these preparatory consultations as **successful** as it gave them an opportunity to exchange ideas in advance of the Forum.
  - The YF webpage was considered by the youth delegates as lacking visibility given the multi-layered design of the UNESCO website, however they found the content and material uploaded to the site as efficient. **They proposed that UNESCO’s website could be more user-friendly and lighter in the future.**
- Integrating the Youth Forum recommendations into the work of the 36th General Conference
  - The recommendations of the Youth Forum were presented by two elected youth representatives of the Forum in **six commissions** of the General Conference, as well as in the plenary session.
  - In line with the relevant Youth Forum recommendation, and for the first time in UNESCO’s history, UNESCO Member States have requested that the Director-General *consider the necessity and examine the feasibility and implications of including youth as a new global priority and determine the best modality for its implementation in the next UNESCO Medium Term Strategy.*
  - In the same perspective, UNESCO Member States have also endorsed and committed UNESCO to other important recommendations of the Youth forum, namely in terms of the cooperation with youth NGOs, the involvement of youth in the organizational structure of UNESCO, in the activities of UNESCO National Commissions and in the delegations to all UNESCO Conferences, in particular to the General Conference.

- In addition, and fully in line with the related Youth Forum recommendation, the UNESCO General Conference requested that the Director-General *develop options for transforming the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development into an institutionalized process beyond 2014, and to submit them to the Executive Board at its 190th session with a view to presenting them to the United Nations General Assembly.*

### **III. SUGGESTIONS BY THE YOUTH DELEGATES FOR THE NEXT YOUTH FORUM**

- Provide more time to debate and interact, less speeches
- Panels in the Forum should be made up exclusively of the youth delegates themselves (instead of youth and adult speakers)
- Provide better information on UNESCO's programme and structure as well as on the Forum
- Consult with youth in developing the Agenda
- Provide more time and spaces for discussion of the Final Report
- Organize more side events